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From: Shore, Berry
Sent: Tue 8/11/2015 12:55:04 PM
Subject: Early Morning Clips

Braddock Bay restoration to start early next year

By David Riley, Staff writer

4:15 p.m. EDT August 10, 2015

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

Imagine a Braddock Bay where boats zip easily in and out of Lake Ontario, a marina hums with activity from boaters and anglers, and coastal wetlands brim with fish and other critters.

This may be difficult to picture while looking out today at the handful of vessels lined up along the warped docks at Braddock Bay Marina.

But Sen. Charles Schumer insisted Monday that the bay will be a very different place by late 2016.

During a visit Monday to the marina, Schumer said a \$9.5 million bay restoration project is supposed to finally begin in January and wrap up by the fall of next year. News emerged last week that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will fund the long-awaited plan.

By the end of the year, the town of Greece also plans to ask for proposals to restore the marina, including the possibility of replacing the worn-out docks with new ones, to provide better public access to the bay, Supervisor Bill Reilich said at a news conference with Schumer.

“The good old days, when this bay was the center of boating and recreation and tourism

and homeowners, will be back soon,” Schumer said.

Hurricane Agnes in 1972 destroyed a large section of a barrier beach that used to separate Braddock Bay from Lake Ontario.

Ever since, the beach has continued to wash away as silt and sand filled in the boat navigation channel, leaving it as shallow as six inches in some areas. As sediment flowed in, boaters flowed out of the marina, which is on state-owned land under a long-term lease to the town.

Talk about restoring the bay has been around for years. Schumer helped to secure \$575,000 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to design a restoration plan completed last year.

The project includes plans to dredge 12,000 cubic yards of sand from the bay to make the existing channel about 200 feet wide and 5 to 7 feet deep. It also will be repositioned to align with the outlet of a creek that flows into the bay to help keep the channel clear.

Plans also call for a new 2 1/2-acre barrier beach, which will be monitored and maintained by state and federal environmental officials and the Army Corps of Engineers, said Judith Enck, administrator of EPA Region 2.

In addition, the Army Corps will seek to restore and protect 340 acres of wetlands to create habitats for species like northern pike and the black tern, an endangered bird that has not nested at Braddock Bay since the late 1990s. Steps like these are hoped to get the larger Rochester Embayment removed from an EPA list of “areas of concern.”

“Without good wetland habitat, fish species suffer and the economy suffers, the boating industry suffers,” said Douglas Wilcox, who holds a doctorate degree in aquatic ecology and is a wetland science professor at The College at Brockport. Wilcox attended Monday’s announcement.

Dan Zanni, who was taking a walk with his grandson at the marina on Monday, said his brother kept a boat there in the 1980s, but he left as the place declined.

The project could revitalize the area, Zanni said, but promises only go so far.

"I'll believe it when I see it," he said.

DRILEY@DemocratandChronicle.com

Feds to spend \$9.5M, restore Lake Ontario bay in western NY

Posted: Aug 10, 2015 12:59 PM EDT

AP/NJ Herald On-line

GREECE, N.Y. (AP) - The federal government will spend \$9.5 million so the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can restore a bay on Lake Ontario's New York shore where erosion and silting have drastically reduced wetlands and hampered boating.

Sen. Charles Schumer was at Braddock Bay Marina Monday to announce the Environmental Protection Agency's project to restore the waterway in the town of Greece, just west of Rochester.

Severe storms over the decades have nearly washed away the bay's barrier beach, allowing sand to be pushed in from the lake. Schumer says the bay has lost 100 acres of wetlands and much of the bay is too shallow for most boats, hurting the marina's business.

The funding will be used to build a barrier beach and to dredge a deeper navigational channel for boaters.

Ford to start removing paint sludge dumped in N.Y. from Mahwah

By SCOTT FALLON

Last updated: Tuesday, August 11, 2015, 1:21 AM

Record

Ford Motor Co. will begin excavating thousands of tons of paint sludge and contaminated soil this week from a site in Rockland County where the company's contractors dumped pollution almost 50 years ago from a plant it operated in Mahwah.

The work, ordered last year by New York officials, is the second major removal of Ford pollution from Ramapo in two years and stands in contrast to recent cleanup plans just a few miles south in Ringwood, where much of the same pollution will remain in place.

The \$7.5 million plan will remove about 10,000 cubic yards of polluted soil and paint sludge — enough to fill 550 large dump trucks — from a wooded area near Torne Valley Road. Workers will dig as far as eight feet below the surface to remove any paint waste, which contains harmful substances like benzene, xylene and toluene, according to a March 2014 record of decision by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation that outlined the cleanup.

The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year, said Jon Holt, a Ford spokesman.

The pollution dates back to the mid-1960s, when Ford contractors dumped paint sludge at several sites along the New Jersey and New York border. At the time, the company had a large factory in Mahwah.

In Ringwood, Ford has removed 53,000 tons of paint sludge and soil from three areas since the mid-2000s, when an investigation by The Record showed significant waste remained at a site even though it had been declared clean by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

In April, EPA officials approved a controversial plan that would place a barrier over 100,000 tons of contaminated soil and paint waste from Ford rather than excavate it. The move was prompted by Ringwood's last-minute plan to build a recycling center funded by Ford at the O'Connor Disposal Area. Capping the 15-acre area off Peters Mine Road significantly lowers the remediation cost for both Ford and Ringwood from \$32.6 million to \$5.4 million.

Those who live in the area, many of them members of the Ramapough Lenape Nation, have reported serious illnesses and early deaths, which they contend are the result of the pollution. No studies have made a direct link, however.

In New York, Ramapo officials negotiated directly with Ford for years to clean up three sites that are much smaller than the polluted areas in Ringwood.

About 30,000 cubic yards of soil laced with lead, arsenic, benzene and other toxic substances were removed in 2013 from a stretch of land along the Ramapo River. Paint sludge has not yet been removed from a smaller area about six miles northeast of the two other sites on Camp Hill Road.

"It's been a long process to get to this point, but we're very pleased with how things are progressing," said Christopher St. Lawrence, Ramapo's town supervisor.

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Officials Downstream From Colorado Mine Spill Demand Answers

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUG. 11, 2015, 3:19 A.M. E.D.T.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Local officials in towns downstream from where millions of gallons of mine waste spilled into a southwest Colorado river are demanding answers about possible long-term threats to the water supply.

Colorado and New Mexico declared stretches of the Animas and San Juan rivers to be disaster areas as the orange-colored waste stream made its way downstream toward Lake Powell in Utah after the spill Wednesday at the abandoned Gold King mine near Silverton, Colorado.

The 3 million gallons of mine waste included high concentrations of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. Workers with the EPA accidentally unleashed the spill as they inspected the abandoned mine site.

EPA officials said Monday that there was no leading edge of contamination visible in downstream sections of the San Juan River or Lake Powell. But that has done little to ease concerns or quell the anger caused by the spill.

The Navajo Nation, which covers parts of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, declared an emergency as it shut down water intake systems and stopped diverting water from the San Juan River.

Members of the tribal council were frustrated during a special meeting Monday and echoed the sentiment of New Mexico and Utah officials that the federal government needs to be held accountable.

Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes discussed the legal implications with his New Mexico counterpart, Hector Balderas, and planned to hold a similar call with Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman, Reyes' office said Monday.

"We hope to work with our sister states to ensure our citizens are protected and whatever remediation is necessary occurs as quickly as possible," Reyes said in a statement. "We will continue to evaluate the legal issues as we receive data and monitor the effects on our communities."

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Utah Gov. Gary Herbert said the governor is disappointed in the EPA's initial handling of the spill but the state has no plans for legal action.

The EPA has said the contaminants were rolling too fast to be an immediate health threat. Experts and federal environmental officials say they expect the river system to dilute the heavy metals before they pose a longer-term threat.

The EPA said stretches of the rivers would be closed for drinking water, recreation and other uses at least through Aug. 17.

Dissolved iron in the waste turned the long plume an alarming orange-yellow — a look familiar to old-time miners who call it "yellow boy" — so "the water appears worse aesthetically than it actually is, in terms of health," said Ron Cohen, a civil and environmental engineering professor at the Colorado School of Mines.

Tests show some of the metals have settled to the bottom and would dissolve only if conditions became acidic, which isn't likely, Cohen said.

The best course for the EPA would be to leave the metals where they settle, he said, noting that next spring's mountain snowmelt would help dilute the contaminants further and flush them downstream.

No die-off of wildlife along the river has yet been detected. Federal officials say all but one of a test batch of fingerling trout deliberately exposed to the water survived over the weekend.

As a precaution, state and federal officials along the river system have ordered public water systems to turn off intake valves as the plume passes. Boaters and fishing groups have been told to avoid affected stretches of the Animas and San Juan rivers, which are crowded with rafters and anglers in a normal summer.

Recreational businesses along the rivers said they were losing thousands of dollars.

"We had lots of trips booked. Right now we're just canceling by the day," said Drew Beezley, co-owner of 4 Corners Whitewater in Durango, Colorado.

He said his company has had to cancel 20 rafting trips so far, and his dozen employees are out of work until the river is deemed safe to enter again.

"We don't really know what the future holds yet," said Beezley, who estimates that he's lost about \$10,000 worth of business since the spill last week. "We don't know if the rest of this season is just scrapped."

The EPA has considered adding a section of the Animas River in Colorado as a Superfund cleanup site at least since the 1990s because heavy metals from Gold King and other defunct mines were killing fish and other species.

The designation would have brought federal clean-up funds, but some in Colorado opposed the move in part because of the stigma attached. The EPA agreed to allow local officials to lead clean-up efforts instead.

DENVER (AP) — The latest in the Colorado mine spill (all times local):

4:25 p.m., August 10, 2015

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez has declared an emergency that frees up state funds to address a massive spill of wastewater from a Colorado mine into the Animas and San Juan rivers.

Federal officials say more than 3 million gallons of water tainted with lead, arsenic and other heavy metals contaminated the rivers following last week's spill.

Martinez on Monday said she was heartbroken and called it an environmental catastrophe.

She joined other officials in criticizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its lack of communication and transparency after a cleanup crew supervised by the EPA accidentally breached a debris dam at the old mine in southwest Colorado on Wednesday.

Under the governor's order, \$750,000 in state funds will be available for well testing, long-term studies and other efforts.

The amount is in addition to \$500,000 in emergency funds the New Mexico Environment Department requested and received Friday.

3:25 p.m.

The head of the New Mexico Environment Department is calling out federal officials for not quickly notifying the state of a toxic wastewater spill from an abandoned Colorado mine.

Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn said Monday that there was no question the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency did not respond as quickly as it should have and must be held accountable.

A cleanup crew supervised by the EPA accidentally breached a debris dam at the old mine in southwest Colorado on Wednesday.

Flynn says New Mexico will stand with the Navajo Nation to ensure the EPA compensates everyone in the Four Corners region who has been affected by the spill.

The EPA released a statement Monday saying it was sharing information as quickly as possible with the public as its experts evaluate any effects of the spill.

The 3-million gallon spill contains lead, arsenic and other heavy metals. It affected the Animas and San Juan rivers in Colorado and New Mexico before reaching Utah.

Initial testing for heavy metals showed the levels may be high. Flynn says the EPA has agreed to do more comprehensive testing and needs to show it's committed to a long-term cleanup effort.

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2:35 p.m.

People are getting their well water tested in northwestern New Mexico after a plume of contaminated water spilled from a Colorado mine into the Animas River.

The New Mexico Environment Department partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to begin testing the water Monday.

The agencies are hoping to get a better understanding of the general quality of well water throughout the area.

The state has identified more than 1,100 domestic wells within 1.5 miles of the Animas and San Juan rivers.

Officials in San Juan County also are warning residents not to use river water. Water stations have been set up around the county where residents can fill up containers and get clean water for their livestock.

Donations of bottled water were coming in and the American Red Cross was working to get water to homeless people who live along the river and depend on it for bathing.

Shower facilities were also opened up for residents in need at the San Juan County fairgrounds.

In Utah, Cynthia Sequanna, a spokeswoman for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, says the park has started warning visitors to avoid drinking, swimming or boating on affected stretches of the San Juan River and Lake Powell until further notice.

2:15 p.m.

Recreational businesses that depend on a Colorado river affected by a mine wastewater spill say they're losing thousands of dollars.

Drew Beezley is co-owner of 4 Corners Whitewater in Durango. He said Monday his company has cancelled 20 rafting trips on the Animas River so far. His 12 employees are out of work until the river is deemed safe to enter again.

Beezley says he's lost about \$10,000 worth of business since the spill last week — and during what promised to be a good rafting year because of heavy snowmelt.

Wild Rivers Expeditions, a river rafting company in Bluff, Utah, says they've lost about \$7,000 in business after customers cancelled rafting trips over worries about heavy metal-laden wastewater making its way to the San Juan River in southern Utah.

On Wednesday, a cleanup crew supervised by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency accidentally breached a debris dam at an old mine, releasing 3 million gallons of wastewater that contains arsenic, lead and other heavy metals.

1:40 p.m.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper has issued a disaster declaration after millions of gallons of contaminated water spilled from a mine into the Animas River and was making its way to Lake Powell in Utah.

The declaration on Monday releases \$500,000 to assist businesses and towns affected by the 3-million-gallon spill that contains heavy metals including lead and arsenic.

It also helps pay for water quality sampling by the state, assessing impacts on fish and wildlife, and any possible cleanup.

Hickenlooper directed state agencies to seek federal funds or low-interest loans to help entities affected by the spill.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has yet to say if the metals pose a threat to human health, frustrating residents in Colorado and downstream in New Mexico and Utah.

On Wednesday, an EPA-supervised cleanup crew accidentally breached a debris dam that had formed inside Colorado's Gold King Mine, which has been inactive since 1923.

1:15 p.m.

Farms along the Animas and San Juan river valleys in New Mexico have no water to irrigate their crops after a massive spill from a closed Colorado mine.

A family farm in Cedar Hill, New Mexico, that serves as many as 3,000 customers in the Four Corners region has been without water since some 3 million gallons of contaminated water spilled from the Gold King Mine last week.

D'rese Sutherland says if it doesn't rain by the weekend, 80 acres of chile, pumpkins and other produce will be in jeopardy at Sutherland Farms.

Members of New Mexico's congressional delegation sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday, asking that the agency develop a comprehensive plan for addressing those communities, farms and ranches that are without water.

The letter states the lack of water is already taking a toll on residents and their livelihoods.

12:30 p.m.

Colorado authorities say there are no reports yet of harm to wildlife in that state five days after the release of millions of gallons of heavy metal-laden wastewater from a mine into the Animas River.

The state's Parks and Wildlife agency said Monday it had inserted cages with more than 100 fingerling trout into the river in southwest Colorado near Durango.

The fish are sensitive to changes in water quality. As of Monday, only one fish had died, but the agency said it didn't know if that was because of the metals in the water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has yet to say if the metals, which include lead and arsenic, pose a threat to human health, frustrating residents and state and local officials in Colorado and downstream in New Mexico and Utah.

About 3 million gallons of wastewater from Colorado's Gold King Mine began spilling on Wednesday when an EPA-supervised cleanup crew accidentally breached a debris dam that had formed inside the mine.

The mine has been inactive since 1923.

12:05 p.m.

Tribal officials with the Navajo Nation have declared an emergency as a massive plume of contaminated wastewater from an abandoned Colorado mine flows downstream toward Lake Powell, which supplies much of the water to the Southwest.

State environment officials in New Mexico and Utah say the plume is passing through the Navajo Nation and headed toward Montezuma Creek near the town of Bluff, a tourist destination.

Some drinking water systems on the Navajo Nation, which spans parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, have shut down their intake systems and stopped diverting water from the San Juan River.

Drinking water was being hauled to some communities.

Navajo President Russell Begaye says the tribe is frustrated with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and he plans to take legal action. An EPA supervised crew has been blamed for causing the spill while attempting to clean up the area.

City to study how Uber affects traffic, pollution

By Danielle Furfaro.

August 10, 2015 | 2:23pm

NY Post

The city council on Monday morning signed into a law a plan to study how for-hire cars like Uber affect traffic and air pollution around the city.

The study will take a close look at how the growing number of Internet-based car service vehicles affect the city's air quality and increasingly congested streets, said Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, who sponsored the bill.

"The rapid growth of the for-hire sector caused deep concern among my colleagues and I," said Rodriguez. "After much deliberation and discussion with industry stakeholders we discovered the best path forward to allow us to truly understand this growth's impacts."

When Rodriguez originally proposed the bill in June, he also introduced a sister bill that would severely limit the amount of new for-hire cars that would be allowed on the road

while the year-long study was taking place. That bill created a firestorm between Mayor de Blasio, the council, and Uber, who claimed that the bill was meant to pacify yellow and green cabbies.

The bill was tabled last month.

Rodriguez had originally wanted the study to take a year, but he and the others sponsors shortened it to four months.

Uber, which currently has about 20,000 affiliate drivers in New York City, said that it will hand over numbers to assist the study.

The results of the study will be due to the council by April 30 of next year.

Shieldalloy hearing set for Wednesday

By JOSEPH P. SMITH, @jpsmith_dj

8:14 p.m. EDT August 10, 2015

Daily Journal

VINELAND – A recent federal government proposal to use only a chemical decontamination method on groundwater from the Shieldalloy Metallurgical Corp. property in Newfield isn't winning over city officials and residents here.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials are at Newfield Borough Hall at 7 p.m. Wednesday for a public hearing on the proposal. The property is part of the federal Superfund cleanup program.

The EPA, in a July issue newsletter about Shieldalloy, indicated that its studies of the site show that a “non-hazardous” solution of sulfur and lime, injected into the water table, is an effective and cheap treatment option.

The agency wants to drop a “pump-and-treat” system that the state developed two decades ago. Federal officials think it costs too much for too little in the way of results and would need to continue for centuries.

The current position in Vineland government on cleanup efforts is that the pump-and-treat system should stay, even if the injection method is adopted.

The city is interested in what happens because the closed Shieldalloy plant has, and still does, sent contaminants via groundwater into Burnt Mill Pond. There is housing near the pond and residents have formed a group to lobby City Hall for action.

Vineland has hired a law firm with a specialty in environmental regulation to represent it in this matter before the EPA as well as the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection.

Meanwhile, Vineland is moving to rebuild the dam that created Burnt Mill Pond. The pond is at a very low level and has been for several years pending the dam project.

City Solicitor Richard Tonetta, in a recent email to a Burnt Mill Pond neighborhood representative, called the EPA evaluation of pump-and-treat a “scare tactic.”

Tonetta also noted that the method the EPA is promoting now would take 50 to 200 years. Both methods should be used, he added.

“In both instances, me and my children will have been long gone,” Tonetta told resident John Mazzei. “The second method, however, is more costly but will protect the spread

of contamination which will ultimately find its way to Vineland and the Burnt Mill Pond, now the subject of a million-dollar dam replacement paid for by the city's taxpayers."

Tonetta adds: "The mayor has instructed me to have all of the appropriate persons attend, including our environmental attorney to present our position. Our Health Department and public officials will likewise attend."

Mazzei, in a followup email to residents, said he agreed with Tonetta that two cleanup methods are needed.

Joseph P. Smith; (856) 563-5252; jsmith@gannettnj.com

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is holding a public meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Newfield Borough Hall, 18 Catawba Avenue.

Additionally, public comments will be accepted until August 28.

Delays for N.J. Transit Train Riders May Become 'Norm,' Amtrak Official Warns

By KATE ZERNIKE

AUG. 10, 2015

NY Times

TRENTON — Train problems like those that stranded commuters several days last month may become "the norm," an Amtrak executive told state legislators here on Monday, as aging tunnels increasingly require repairs, passenger demand grows and lawmakers cannot agree on how to pay for a new tunnel under the Hudson River to ease the burden.

Shutting down the existing century-old tunnels, which is necessary to repair them, would reduce train capacity by 75 percent, said Stephen Gardner, who oversees development along the Northeast Corridor for Amtrak, which controls the Hudson tunnels also used by New Jersey Transit. That means just six trains per hour will be able to pass through at peak hours, down from 24 an hour now.

An Amtrak conductor and commuters alike waited at Newark Penn Station on Wednesday morning. Service into and out of Manhattan was suspended for an hour or more.

On Day 3 of Delays, New Jersey Transit's Shortfalls Are Painfully Clear JULY 22, 2015

Amtrak's proposed Gateway project would ease that and allow for the projected doubling in the number of cross-Hudson train commuters over the next 25 years, by creating a new tunnel for trains, expanding New York's Pennsylvania Station and repairing other infrastructure now prone to breakdown. Ideally, he said, the railroad would build the Gateway tunnel by 2025, then shut down the existing tunnels for repairs to be completed by 2030.

But that presumes that funding for Gateway comes soon — and that the existing tunnels hold up, despite age and damage caused by flooding from Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Amtrak has committed \$300 million to the project, which is estimated to cost about \$14 billion, but Mr. Gardner said it could do no more without help from the federal government and New York and New Jersey.

"When you have assets of this age, under this level of service and stress it's not feasible really to imagine that you're going to get perfect performance," Mr. Gardner said. Given the damage caused by time and the storm, and the constant travel of trains making it hard to find more than a couple of hours here and there to do repairs, he said, "it's quite possible these delays will become the norm."

Mr. Gardner showed legislators a piece of paper-insulated copper feeder line from the 1930s, which was among the elements that failed and caused the delays in July. It looked like charred wood, something better suited to roasting marshmallows than assisting the movement of 450 trains and 200,000 daily commuters along one of the nation's busiest corridors.

Legislators at the hearing here were rapt as he explained the domino effect of failures that led to the week of delays in July, when it took many commuters three hours to travel just 15 miles. They agreed on the urgency of the Gateway project, calling it a competitive factor for the regional economy. "At some point, people will simply move and employers will seek locations where passenger transportation is less arduous," said Senator Robert Gordon, a Democrat from northern New Jersey and the chairman of the Senate legislative oversight committee.

But it was unclear what the legislature could do, given resistance from the governors.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York, a Democrat, said he did not think his state should have to finance Gateway, telling reporters, "It's not my tunnel."

A spokeswoman for Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey repeated the governor's belief that the federal government should pay for the tunnel. New Jersey's transportation trust fund has exhausted its ability to borrow, which will leave it bankrupt after this year, and Mr. Christie, a Republican who is running for president, has refused to raise the gas tax, which has traditionally filled the fund. He canceled an earlier Hudson train tunnel and diverted billions intended to finance it to state transportation projects to avoid raising the tax.

Mr. Gardner and New Jersey legislators, Democrat and Republican, argued that the project benefits the entire region, and indeed the national economy, given the number of passengers traveling between Boston and Richmond, Va.

Mr. Gardner proposed that the federal government pay 80 percent of the cost of Gateway, with the states and other local entities — like the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey — paying 20 percent. That split was common for aviation projects, he

said, and Amtrak carries three times as many passengers between New York and Washington as all the airlines put together.

The Obama administration, however, has not committed to that financing. The office of Anthony Foxx, the transportation secretary, said on Monday that he would meet with Mr. Christie and Senator Cory A. Booker of New Jersey, a Democrat, on Aug. 18 and has asked to meet with Mr. Cuomo.

Mr. Cuomo said on Monday, "If they're serious, I'll come to the table."

Emma G. Fitzsimmons, Thomas Kaplan and Patrick McGeehan contributed reporting from New York.

DEC: Garlock fined \$100K for failing to comply with cleanup agreement

By Julie Sherwood

August 5, 2015

Penfield Post

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says Garlock Sealing Technologies, LLC, in Palmyra, owes a \$100 fine for failing to comply with conditions of a Brownfield cleanup agreement. Michael Johnson/Messenger Post Media |

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says Garlock Sealing Technologies, LLC, in Palmyra, owes a \$100 fine for failing to comply with conditions of a Brownfield cleanup agreement.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says Garlock Sealing Technologies, LLC, in Palmyra, owes a \$100 fine for failing to comply with conditions of a Brownfield cleanup agreement.

Garlock Sealing Technologies, LLC, celebrated completion of a Brownfield cleanup

program at its Palmyra facility in 2012. But on Wednesday, the state Department of Environmental Conservation announced the manufacturer owes a \$100,000 fine for what the DEC said was the company's "failure to comply with conditions" of that cleanup program.

The manufacturer, with operations worldwide, is based at 1666 Division St. Palmyra. The company makes gaskets, oil-seals, compression packing, hydraulic components, and mechanical and expansion joints.

According to the DEC, Garlock was fined as a civil penalty "because Garlock failed to comply with important post-cleanup requirements that are designed to protect public health and the environment."

The DEC requires compliance with Site Management Plans for a Brownfield cleanup that requires a company to submit periodic review reports and maintain engineering controls. "Garlock, however, did not submit timely periodic review reports and failed to maintain its soil vapor intrusion mitigation system," said the DEC.

Garlock has since addressed its soil vapor intrusion issue and filed the reports, the DEC added.

Eric Vaillancourt, president of Garlock Sealing Products, reached Wednesday on his cell phone in Greenland, referred questions to Dan Grgurich, Garlock's director of Investor Relations and Corporate Communications. Messages left for Grgurich were not returned by press time Wednesday.

According to the DEC, Garlock was first accepted into the state's Brownfield Cleanup Program in August 2005. The purpose was to investigate and remediate its property, which had storage tanks with miles of pipes and vacant land that had been a landfill, along with discharges into Red Creek. Most of the pollution on the property's 40-acre site was related to the use of the solvent toluene. The roughly \$5 million project involved hauling away soil for cleaning and eliminating discharges into the creek.

The DEC issued Garlock three Certificate of Completions (COCs), in 2006, 2008 and 2011.

The Brownfield Cleanup Program encourages the voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties known as brownfields so that they can be reused and redeveloped. For sites participating in the Brownfield Cleanup Program, a Certificate of Completion (COC) is issued when the DEC approves a final engineering report or issues a “no further action decision” document. A COC provides liability protections as well as tax credits for eligible parties. The DEC, however, may revoke a COC for non-compliance with its terms.

“The Brownfield Cleanup Program offers an opportunity for contaminated sites to be redeveloped for economic development projects,” stated DEC Regional Director Paul D’Amato. “However, after completing the cleanup, there are obligations to safeguard human health and monitoring will enforce these obligations.”

For more information on environmental cleanup and brownfields, visit DEC’s website.

Documentary Explores Struggle of New Jersey’s Ramapough Tribe

By TAMMY LA GORCE

AUG. 8, 2015

NY Times

Corey Bobker was an accomplished 30-something adult when he took his first drive into the Ramapo Mountains in 2010. But the 12-year-old version of him still had knots in his stomach.

“When I was a kid growing up, everybody knew you don’t go up into the mountains because you’d get shot,” said Mr. Bobker, producer of the documentary “American Native.” His film explores the struggles of the Ramapough Lenape Nation, a Native American tribe with about 5,000 members, according to its chief, Dwaine C. Perry. The Ramapough live mostly across the Stag Hill region of Mahwah, Ringwood and nearby Hillburn, N.Y.

Mr. Bobker, of Los Angeles, grew up in Livingston. As a child, he attended summer camp in Stanhope, near the Ramapos in Mahwah. He had not gotten close to the mysterious mountain chain again until this anxiety-ridden car trip to visit with the tribe for the first time. "I was definitely worried," he said. "I thought, Maybe it's true — maybe they're going to confront us if we say something the wrong way."

Mr. Bobker's traveling partner, Steven Oritt, also from Los Angeles and the director of "American Native," has a vivid memory of their first visit.

"One of the first things the chief said to me was, 'What are you?' " Mr. Oritt said. When Mr. Oritt told Mr. Perry, a Vietnam War veteran and, for the last 10 years, the elected chief of the Ramapough, that he was Jewish, Mr. Perry posed a question: If a few of Mr. Oritt's ancestors were not 100 percent Jewish, would that make him any less Jewish? Mr. Oritt replied that it would not. "He said, 'Now you know where my people are coming from,' " Mr. Oritt recalled.

Despite the filmmakers' challenging first encounter with the Ramapough, the result, five years later, is an 84-minute documentary chronicling the tribe's quest for respect and recognition. Made for \$262,000, "American Native" has been shown at several film festivals since last spring and recently won the award for best documentary at the Manchester Film Festival in July. In September, "American Native" will be shown at the Clairidge Cinema, in Montclair and the Warner Theater, in Ridgewood.

Mr. Bobker said the filmmakers spent close to a year convincing Ramapough leaders, particularly Mr. Perry, that a documentary would give them "a voice to tell people who they are," he said.

Mr. Perry questioned their sincerity. "I told them, 'Yeah, sure, I've heard that before,' " he said recently, from within a still-under-construction house of worship on a 13-acre parcel of land in Mahwah owned by the tribe. His skepticism stemmed from being disappointed by past articles in *Weird NJ*, *The New Yorker* and other publications, as well as the tribe's portrayal in a 2013 movie, "Out of the Furnace," which provoked a small faction of Ramapoughs to sue for \$50 million, claiming defamation. The film depicted them as "scumbags and inbreds," Mr. Perry said. The lawsuit was unsuccessful.

Folklore surrounding the Ramapough, including the stories that caused Mr. Bobker to think twice about leaving his camp bunk in his youth, has inspired others in entertainment. "The Red Road," a recent series on Sundance TV, was based on the tribe and concerned tensions between its people and the surrounding community.

Though the television show was fictional, the tensions are real. Mr. Perry said "bigotry and good-old-boy Southern-style politics" had prevented the Ramapough from obtaining permits to complete the house of worship in Mahwah.

The heritage of the Ramapough is tangled in rumor and myth. Theories about their multiracial ancestry have centered around freed black slaves, Dutch settlers and the Lenape Delaware Indians, who fled to the mountains in the late 17th century to escape Dutch and English settlers. New York and New Jersey recognized the tribe in 1980 as the Ramapough Lenape Nation. When Mr. Perry finally agreed to the documentary, it was in an effort, he said, to "try once again to let the truth come out, to let people know the bigger story is about the haves and the have-nots, which has always been the story of the native peoples of this land."

"American Native" tracks multiple generations. Cameras follow a young Ramapough, Devynn Mann, through the halls of West Milford High School, where she talks with a teacher about "Jackson Whites," a local term and racial slur referring to the Ramapough.

Mr. Perry, 67, is shown in Trenton, attending a hearing about a bill to bolster state recognition and encountering concerns that if it were granted, the Ramapough would consider opening a casino. "We don't have any interest in a casino," he said. The bill, still pending during shooting, eventually passed the General Assembly but never made it to the Senate floor.

The film also closely follows a bid for recognition at the federal level, initiated by the Ramapough in 1978. If granted, it would provide benefits and subsidies that would help stem what Mr. Perry called the "fiscal attrition" of the Ramapough. "Taxes go up in this area and our people have to move," he said. "That happens a lot."

Although they said they do not have an agenda, the filmmakers would like to see the tribe win federal recognition, and they hope “American Native” opens a dialogue similar to the one posed by Mr. Perry five years ago about Mr. Oritt’s Jewish heritage, Mr. Oritt said. “Selfishly speaking, I want the film to get as much exposure as it can,” he said. “But I also hope it gets people to dig a little deeper when they’re thinking about issues of race and identity.”

Screenings of “American Native” will take place at the Clairidge Cinema in Montclair on Sept. 16 at 7:30 p.m. and at the Warner Theater in Ridgewood on Sept. 17 at 7:30 p.m. For more information: americannative-themovie.com. To learn about other screenings: <http://gathr.us/films/american-native>.

A Once-Flourishing Pima Cotton Industry Withers in an Arid California

By HIROKO TABUCHI

AUG. 7, 2015

NY Times

FRESNO, Calif. — Up and down the San Joaquin Valley, vast fields that once grew cotton lie fallow, remnants of a boom and bust fueled by a worldwide demand for premium T-shirts and linens.

Farmers here have fallowed acres of Pima cotton by the thousands, threatening the region’s unlikely reign as the world’s biggest producer of the specialty cotton, also called Supima.

Environmentalists say that farmers should never have bet so heavily on a thirsty cash crop in this dry swath of central California — particularly a crop used for luxury clothing, as opposed to food.

Ni Meijuan, center, with trainees at Keer Group’s cotton mill in South Carolina. Keer, a Chinese manufacturer, set up a factory in the United States in part because textile production in China is becoming increasingly unprofitable.

A canal near Byron, Calif. The Byron-Bethany Irrigation District was accused by the state of illegally diverting water and could be fined \$1.5 million.

As recently as 2011, American farmers planted a near-record 306,000 acres of Pima cotton, almost all of that in the San Joaquin Valley, consuming an estimated 249 billion gallons of water. That's enough to meet the average yearly water needs of about 1.9 million households. But now, with reservoirs nearly dry, farmers in California's hardest-hit districts have no surface water to irrigate their crops. At the same time, cotton prices have slumped, hurt by a global glut. Farmers may harvest as little as 100,000 acres of Pima cotton in California this year, according to the latest forecasts.

Purveyors of Pima say that the soft, extra-long fiber, favored by high-end retailers like Brooks Brothers and Polo Ralph Lauren, is irreplaceable. And even more important, they say, it supports American jobs.

"It's the world's finest cotton," said Jim Neufeld, a third-generation cotton farmer in Wasco, at the southern end of the valley. This season, he planted 250 acres of cotton, down from a peak of 11,000 acres in the 1990s.

"It simply doesn't fit into today's environment," he said.

Pima cotton brought in \$500 million last year, almost all of it grown in California, and generally commands at least twice the price of the more common variety, upland cotton. It was long the exception to the backdrop of the state's overall cotton production, which has been declining for decades, hurt by recurring droughts that drain water levels and increasingly pesticide-resistant insects like the pink bollworm.

Pima, sometimes referred to as the "cashmere of cottons," has longer, stronger fibers than upland cotton, improving its softness and luster.

The luxury cotton was introduced to California in the 1990s, and farmers quickly realized

that the arid, expansive San Joaquin Valley was ideal for the crop, which agricultural officials had hoped could rival premium Egyptian cotton.

“It’s a just-add-water kind of location,” said Robert B. Hutmacher, a cotton specialist at the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “Of course, just-add-water used to be much easier to achieve.”

The ideal conditions were not the only factor driving its production. A trade group, called Supima, financed by farmers and supported by federal subsidies, spent heavily to generate demand from textile mills.

Supima has organized shows at New York Fashion Week, sponsors an annual design competition and opened a SoHo pop-up store, trucking in some 1,000 cotton plants to transform a parking lot into an urban cotton field.

Pima cotton quickly became the fiber of choice for premium shirts and bedsheets at luxury retailers, including Brooks Brothers, Polo Ralph Lauren, Lands’ End, Uniqlo, Agave Denim, Everlane and James Perse.

The high prices that Supima commanded meant that cotton farmers could afford the rising costs of water. Farmers invested in special cotton gins to more gently separate the fluffy Pima cotton from its seed. Improvements in yield meant California farmers could reap 1,200 to 1,300 pounds per acre, about twice the average for the entire country.

By 2011, the United States was the world’s biggest producer of luxury cotton, eclipsing major premium cotton producers like Egypt and China, according to data from the cotton merchant Paul Reinhart.

“They were chasing markets,” said Tony Azevedo, a cotton farmer in Stratford, south of Fresno, who this year planted 2,400 acres of Pima cotton, down from 3,600 acres in 2011. “We’ve always been straight and steady. But I became nervous about pricing ourselves out of the market.”

Apparel manufacturers, wary of ever-higher prices, started to shift to synthetic fibers, marketing stretchy yoga pants and other sportswear that used little or no cotton. China started ramping up cotton production after several years of declines. Cotton demand and prices started to slump.

Now, the drought is proving to be the cotton's undoing. For two years, farmers in San Joaquin Valley's main water districts have received no surface water, prompting some farmers to resort to pumping groundwater to irrigate their fields.

But experts say that is not a sound long-term strategy. Extensive overdrafting of the region's aquifers has led to a precipitous drop in groundwater levels, especially in the southern part of the valley, where most of the Pima cotton is grown. California is working with farmers to regulate groundwater usage.

"The valley's two groundwater basins that are probably the most over-droughted here in California," said Tara Moran, head of the Sustainable Groundwater division at Stanford University's Water in the West program. "Ultimately, people will have to make a decision about what kind of farming California can sustain."

Cotton farmers are making efforts to cut down on water use, switching from flooding their fields to drip irrigation, which uses a network of tubes to let water drip slowly to the plants' roots. The drip method halves the amount of water required to grow one acre of cotton, experts say. There are also efforts underway to replenish the region's aquifers by putting water back into the ground through ponds and wells.

Still, some environmentalists question whether California should be growing cotton at all. They also say the government should not be subsidizing luxury cotton farming in a region experiencing severe water shortages.

Though Pima cotton has been exempt from the direct payments that have long sustained upland cotton farming, the most recent farm bill gives \$4 million over the next

five years to Supima to help market the premium cotton. The bill also allocates \$16 million in aid each year through 2018 to American spinners and apparel manufacturers that use American Pima cotton.

“When water is short in California, it’s crazy for the government to be subsidizing luxury crops like Pima cotton,” said Tom Stokely, a water policy analyst at the California Water Impact Network. “It just doesn’t make sense. It’s not something that benefits the public at large.”

Cotton industry officials say cotton plants use about 40 percent less water than crops like almonds. And tree crops like almonds and pistachios must be watered every year, but cotton fields can be fallowed if water restrictions become too severe, making it a versatile crop, they say.

Mr. Neufeld in his cotton field. He says that the investments in cotton that he made during the boom years tie him to the crop. Credit Jim Wilson/The New York Times

California’s cotton industry also supports more than 25,000 jobs on farms and in gins, mills and warehouses, according to the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association, and another 137,000 jobs in related industries, like apparel.

Buxton S. Midyette, Supima’s vice president for marketing and promotions, said he did not think the drought would last forever. Even in drought conditions, water supplies could be better managed to leave water for some cotton production, he said.

Mr. Midyette also noted that consumers’ support for local food crops did not appear to extend to fiber crops.

“Here’s this American-grown cotton that continues to be grown here in multigeneration families,” he said. “And it’s the best in the world.”

In an interview, Joe Dixon, senior vice president for sourcing and production at Brooks Brothers, said the drought had not yet had an effect on the supply of Pima cotton needed for the company's products, including four million shirts a year. Nor, he said, is the company contemplating reducing its Pima cotton use for environmental reasons.

"We want to use the best raw materials for our products," he said. "Supima is the finest."

"I don't think people are unable to drink water because we're growing cotton," he continued. "As long as it's available, we'll continue to buy it."

But for some farmers, economics drive the decision to shift away from the crop.

Don J. Cameron grew cotton for 35 years at his ranch southwest of Fresno, shifting primarily to Pima cotton in the 1990s. But after 2011, when he grew about 400 acres of cotton, his acreage plummeted, and by 2013 his Pima cotton crop was down to 40 acres.

He planted no cotton this year, instead growing tomatoes and other vegetables, which are more profitable per gallon of water.

"We produced the best cotton," he said. "It's going to be very hard to replace."

But farmers like Mr. Neufeld of Wasco say that investments he made during the boom years tie him to the crop. He and other local farmers spent \$4.5 million to build a new gin in the late 1990s, he said.

"To turn around and junk it now would be too disheartening," he said. "We may be forced to give it up — we don't know — but I'm one of those guys really trying to make it work."

Colorado Pledges Funds to Help Clean Up Gold Mine's Sludge Spill: EPA criticized for accident that sent heavy metals downriver into New Mexico

By Dan Frosch

Aug. 10, 2015 4:14 p.m. ET

Wall St. Journal

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper declared a state of emergency on Monday, freeing up \$500,000 in state funds to help clean up a massive mine spill that sent an estimated 3 million gallons of toxic, mustard-hued sludge surging down the Animas River in the southwestern part of the state.

"Our priority remains to ensure public safety and minimize environmental impacts," Mr. Hickenlooper said. The spill occurred Wednesday after an cleanup crew working with the Environmental Protection Agency accidentally caused a breach in an old, abandoned gold mine, releasing a plume of contaminated water.

"We will work closely with the EPA to continue to measure water quality as it returns to normal, but also to work together to assess other mines throughout the state to make sure this doesn't happen again," he added.

The environmental agency has apologized for the accident, and for a slow response that has drawn sharp criticism from New Mexico and Colorado officials and local residents.

The sludge, which has since emptied into the San Juan River in New Mexico, contains such contaminants as lead and arsenic from the Gold King Mine, north of Silverton, Colo., one of thousands of abandoned mines across the U.S. West.

The EPA has still been trying to determine the extent of the pollution from the spill. There were initial indications that the spill had not immediately affected aquatic life as testing showed small insects living in the river near Durango were still alive after exposure to the contaminants.

The agency was to issue more information on the spill later Monday.

Meanwhile, frustration and concern continued to mount in southwestern Colorado and northern New Mexico, where late-summer river recreation season, a vital cog to the local economies, had been effectively shut down. Officials emphasized that both the short- and long-term effects of the spill remained unclear, even as the bright yellow water was starting to run clearer.

“I’ve been inundated with constituents calling me asking whether the water will ever be safe again,” said Gwen Lachelt, a La Plata County commissioner in Colorado. “We are deeply concerned with water quality when we have a major rainstorm and during spring runoff due to the sediment deposited during the spill.”

Ms. Lachelt said county officials had asked the EPA to begin assessing the dangers posed by the abandoned mines in the area to the Animas and San Juan rivers.

“The real frustration is that we have no data,” said Peter Butler, co-coordinator for the Animas River Stakeholders Group, made up of local environmental organizations, along with mining companies and federal and state agencies. “The river is a big deal in Durango. And we don’t have any data about what was in the plume when it came through the town.”

In New Mexico, state officials said they were being overwhelmed with calls from residents in rural San Juan County worried that their domestic wells might be contaminated.

Allison Scott Majure, spokeswoman for New Mexico’s environment department, said there was a concern that even after the plume passed through areas of the state, contaminated sediment could still seep into wells. As a result, the state was offering free well testing to residents in the Animas River floodplain, she said.

“We’re still feeling a bit frustrated with EPA,” she said. “They’ll have more of their team here for domestic well testing tomorrow. We could have used them today.”

Write to Dan Frosch at dan.frosch@wsj.com

Anger Rises as E.P.A. Increases Estimate of Toxic Water Spill at Colorado Mine

By JULIE TURKEWITZ,

AUG. 10, 2015

NY Times

DURANGO, Colo. — Anger over a spill of toxic water from a mine that turned this community's river into a yellow-orange ribbon rose on Sunday when the Environmental Protection Agency announced that the spill was three times larger than previously stated — and that the agency was still unsure if the polluted water posed a health threat to humans or animals.

The agency, typically charged with responding to toxic disasters, has claimed responsibility for the spill, which unleashed a chemical brew that caused levels of arsenic, lead and other metals to spike in the Animas River, a tributary that plays a vital role in the culture and economy in this patch of southwestern Colorado.

Agency officials said on Sunday that the size of the spill was larger than originally estimated: more than three million gallons rather than one million.

La Plata County and the City of Durango have declared states of emergency, and the county estimates that about 1,000 residential water wells could be contaminated. The river is closed indefinitely, and the La Plata sheriff has hastily recast his campaign signs into posters warning river visitors to stay out of the water.

The yellow plume has traveled down to New Mexico, where it is being tracked, but it is starting to dissipate, officials said.

On Sunday night, residents packed a school auditorium in Durango for a meeting with the agency's regional director, Shaun McGrath. During a public comment session that lasted more than two hours, residents flouted a sign on the wall that instructed the auditorium's typical patrons — middle schoolers — to refrain from calling out, jumping up or insulting others during assemblies.

Shouts rang out. A few people cried. One resident questioned whether the agency had refashioned itself into the “Environmental Pollution Agency.” Others demanded to know what would happen to wildlife, livestock, water wells, sediment and river-based jobs.

“When — when can we be open again?” said David Moler, 35, the owner of a river-rafting company who had approached a microphone. “All I hear is a handful of ‘gonnados,’ ” he added. “What should I tell my employees?”

Mr. McGrath and his colleagues urged patience and assured residents that they would provide information about health risks once they had it. The agency, he said, is awaiting test results to determine whether the water poses a risk.

“We’re going to continue to work until this is cleaned up,” Mr. McGrath said, “and hold ourselves to the same standards that we would anyone that would have created this situation.”

On Aug. 5, a team from the Environmental Protection Agency was investigating an abandoned mine about 50 miles north of here. Called the Gold King, it was last active in the 1920s, but it had been leaking toxic water at a rate of 50 to 250 gallons a minute for years. It is owned by a group called the San Juan Corporation.

A call to the company’s lawyer was not returned.

The agency had planned to find the source of the leak in the hope of one day stanching it. Instead, as workers used machinery to hack at loose material, a surprise deluge of orange water ripped through, spilling into Cement Creek and flowing into the Animas. The burst did not injure workers.

The next day, as the neon water slid into Durango, masses of community members watched from the riverbanks. Some called it a painful procession: The Animas River is considered the cultural soul of this region, a sort of moving Main Street that hosts multiple floating parades a year and is typically bustling with rafters and kayakers.

Children study the river. Sweethearts marry on its banks. Its former name, given by Spaniards, is Río de las Ánimas, coincidentally, “River of Souls.”

On Sunday, State Senator Ellen Roberts, a Republican who lives near the river, cried softly as she considered the pollution, adding that she had dropped her father's ashes in its depths.

"It is not just a scenic destination," Ms. Roberts said. "It is where people literally raise their children. It is where the farmers and ranchers feed their livestock, which in turn feeds the people. We're isolated from Denver through the mountains. And we are pretty resourceful people. But if you take away our water supply, we're left with virtually no way to move forward."

There are about 200 abandoned mines in the Animas watershed, the last of which closed in the early 1990s. Colorado has about 23,000 abandoned mines; the United States has an estimated 500,000. Since the 1870s, metal mining has both enriched and poisoned this region, turning the earth under portions of southwest Colorado into a maze of tunnels and leaving behind shuttered sites oozing with chemicals.

The Animas region is distinct in that it has an organization called the Animas River Stakeholders Group, a loose coalition of mining companies; environmental groups; property owners; and local, state and federal government entities that have worked together since 1994 to clean up some of these sites.

In recent years, the group had identified the Gold King as one of the two most polluted mine sites, and some have pushed to figure out the sources of its chemical bleed, believing that a cleanup was necessary. The Environmental Protection Agency was moving ahead with that project — without its partners — when the spill occurred

Shipping companies: Nix the Port Huron Float Down

By Beth LeBlanc,

2:25 p.m. EDT August 10, 2015

Times Herald

Canadian and U.S. shipowners are sounding off on the annual Port Huron Float Down — and the message isn't positive.

The Canadian Shipowners Association and the U.S. Lake Carriers' Association, in a joint statement Monday, said the event needlessly jeopardizes participants and hinders commercial operations "at the height of the shipping season."

"...The Port Huron Float Down is neither carefully planned nor adequately supervised, and when coupled with the expected consumption of alcohol, this is an invitation to disaster," Lake Carriers' Association President James Weakley, said in the statement.

"The fast-running and chilly waters of the St. Clair River between Port Huron and Marysville are a federal navigation channel, not a playground."

Thousands of people participate each year in the nearly seven-mile float from Lighthouse Beach in Port Huron to Chrysler Beach in Marysville.

The unsanctioned event, scheduled for 1 p.m. this Sunday, can take up to six hours to complete depending on weather conditions.

The Float Down can be a headache for first responders, who worry about the mix of cold water temperatures, fast currents, packed waterways, and alcohol consumption.

The route is further complicated by floaters' proximity to the Canadian border and commercial shipping traffic.

During the 2014 float down, a 19-year-old Fenton man drowned while participating with a large group of friends. Brady Morton left his raft to go swimming and never returned. He was found after a four-day search of the river.

Erik Kimball, the owner of the Port Huron Float Down website and a past organizer of the event, said the U.S. Coast Guard's closure of the river adds a level of safety to the event.

He said the practice shouldn't be a surprise to commercial shipping.

"This is nothing new or unusual for them," Kimball said.

"The waterways are for everybody, not just commercial traffic."

Lt. Ben Chamberlain, a public affairs officer for U.S. Coast Guard Sector Detroit, said the river will be shut down to boating traffic from noon to 8 p.m. Sunday.

During sanctioned events, such as the International Offshore Powerboat Races this past weekend, organizers obtain a marine event permit and the Coast Guard is able to coordinate and move shipping traffic through during breaks in the event.

That won't be the case during the unsanctioned Float Down, when all commercial and recreational traffic will be barred from the river to make way for floaters.

"At several events there will be a safety zone in place, but it won't impede (commercial) traffic," Chamberlain said.

"We don't have an official point of contact for who is running the Float Down so coordination isn't a possibility for us."

Robert Lewis-Manning, president of the Canadian Shipowners Association, said the U.S. and Canadian associations have voiced their disapproval of the event in the past, but never in a public statement. Morton's death last year prompted action, Lewis-Manning said.

"As mariners we deal with life and death situations on the water frequently," Lewis-Manning said. "This is just such an obvious risk to us."

The Float Down also results in costs and delays for commercial vessels.

"Our members' vessels cost thousands of dollars an hour to operate," Weakley said, in the statement. "While companies attempt to schedule around the Float Down, it is inevitable that ships will end up at anchor and the losses can quickly reach five digits."

Lewis-Manning said the delays often extend several hours longer than the actual event window as officials work to clear backlogged traffic.

Lewis-Manning said commercial shippers work with several events on the water throughout the year, but they usually are well-organized and carefully supervised.

"Being an unsanctioned event, (the Float Down) really doesn't have the coordination that you would hope it would have in order to mitigate the risks," he said.

"We hope that common sense will prevail in the long run and people will see this is not the best recreation activity."

Lake Carriers Association represents 56 U.S. flag carrying vessels. Canadian Shipowners Association represents 86 Canadian flag carrying vessels.

Contact Beth LeBlanc at (810) 989-6259 or eleblanc@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter [@THBethLeBlanc](#).

In Your Opinion: Natural gas can help air quality

Posted: Monday, August 10, 2015 6:00 pm

The Daily Star.com

It was disappointing reading the all the negative comments about natural gas expressed at the July 16 FERC meeting at Foothills Performing Arts Center on the proposed natural gas pipeline. According to the Energy Information Administration, not only are carbon emissions from natural gas about half as from coal, but also 25 percent less than gasoline, meaning burning natural gas in our cars would be better than the other type of 'gas'.

But the real environmental plus from natural gas comes from a reduction in air pollution, especially particulate matter, and toxins like mercury. And remember acid rain that pollutes upstate lakes? That pollution originates from Midwest coal plants.

Fortunately, the nation as a whole is moving away from coal and toward natural gas and renewables for power generation. Natural gas barely edged out coal as the top energy source in April, but as natural gas prices rise, coal unfortunately is expected to regain its top position.

However, it's more than just global warming and air pollution. I read that mountaintop coal mining has dropped 62 percent since 2008. It seems there is no end to the environmental woes associated with burning coal. And I failed to mention the 1,100 toxic coal ash waste sites, some of which appear to regularly overflow into rivers as the media reports.

If folks really question the environmental benefits of burning natural gas, I suggest they consider using coal gas to cook and heat with — which in fact was done half a century ago before environmental regulations outlawed it due to the public health threat it posed.

Irvin Dawid

Burlingame, California

(Dawid has a sister who lives in Oneonta.)

Obama keeps his promises on carbon

By Cal Thomas (tcaeditors@tribpub.com)

August 10, 2015

Adirondak Daily Enterprize, Tribune Media Services

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Sen. Barack Obama said, "if somebody wants to build a coal power plant, they can. It's just that it will bankrupt them." He added that under his now-defeated Cap and Trade bill, "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket."

In 2010, Cap and Trade died in the Senate, but the president's goal of bankrupting the coal industry never waned. Monday he announced that the Environmental Protection Agency will impose new regulations throughout the country limiting carbon emissions from power plants powered by fossil fuels. Several states are challenging the EPA rules "that aim to cut carbon emissions in the power sector by 32 percent." EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, testifying before Congress, was asked about claims that the new EPA plan would only impact global warming by a measly .01 degrees Celsius, to which she replied, "I'm not disagreeing that this action in and of itself will not make all the difference we need to address climate action, but if we don't take action domestically, we will never get started."

The Washington Post, which believes the Earth is warming and humans are responsible, acknowledged the regulations have "shortcomings" but endorsed them because they set a good example for the rest of the world.

So, these regulations are likely to cost jobs, raise electricity prices and have a minimal effect on global temperatures, but they will set a good example? Is that the new policy standard?

Among many reasons Americans should be suspicious of this "climate change putsch," as a Wall Street Journal editorial labeled it, is that Administrator McCarthy has refused to release the "secret science" her agency used when drafting the new regulations. This "most transparent administration in U.S. history" has now added to the secret side deals with Iran, secret scientific "evidence," which may not be evidence at all. Cults do that by suppressing any information and facts contrary to the imposed orthodoxy.

After the initial fusillade from critics, the president fired back, arguing that addressing "climate change" is a moral obligation and a matter of national security. It would be helpful to know the president's standard for determining what is moral and what is immoral, especially since he has said nothing about those Planned Parenthood videos in which high-level employees are shown explaining how the organization can abort babies in ways that preserve body parts. And there is ISIS, which continues to operate and appears not to have been "diminished and degraded," as the president promised it would. Is ISIS not a bigger national security issue?

The president might have more political success and even attract Republican and conservative support had he framed this in a different way. Instead of attacking coal plants and other users of fossil fuel that have produced electricity and elevated the American lifestyle, he should have launched a campaign to deprive terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists of oil revenue. Instead of picking the controversial "climate change" horse to ride roughshod over Congress and a skeptical public, the president might have embraced an alternative fuel agenda that would have achieved his desired end without the crushing blows that almost certainly will impact states where fossil fuels have provided jobs that probably will evaporate, if not immediately then eventually.

The EPA regulations are likely to reach the Supreme Court. In 2007, while the Court did grant authority to the EPA to regulate carbon emissions (*Mass. v. EPA*), it said it was not giving the agency an unrestricted license to do what it wants. It ruled that costs and outcomes must be taken into consideration as part of its regulatory mandates. The Court decision was one of two rebukes it has delivered to the EPA in the last two years for exceeding its statutory powers.

As the Court noted, "When an agency claims to discover in a long-extant statute an unheralded power to regulate a significant portion of the American economy, we typically greet its announcement with a measure of skepticism. We expect Congress to speak clearly if it wishes to assign to an agency decisions of vast economic and political significance."

These are bound to be the issues should the EPA regulations again reach the Court, as they should.

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Stinking mats of seaweed piling up on Caribbean beaches

The Associated Press

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KINGSTON, Jamaica -- The picture-perfect beaches and turquoise waters that people expect on their visits to the Caribbean are increasingly being fouled by mats of decaying seaweed that attract biting sand fleas and smell like rotten eggs.

Clumps of the brownish seaweed known as sargassum have long washed up on Caribbean coastlines, but researchers say the algae blooms have exploded in extent and frequency in recent years. The 2015 seaweed invasion appears to be a bumper crop, with a number of shorelines so severely hit that some tourists have canceled summer trips and lawmakers on Tobago have termed it a "natural disaster."

From the Dominican Republic in the north, to Barbados in the east, and Mexico's Caribbean resorts to the west, officials are authorizing emergency money to fund cleanup efforts and clear stinking mounds of seaweed that in some cases have piled up nearly 10 feet high on beaches, choked scenic coves and cut off moored boats.

With the start of the region's high tourism season a few months away, some officials are calling for an emergency meeting of the 15-nation Caribbean Community, worried that the worsening seaweed influx could become a chronic dilemma for the globe's most tourism-dependent region.

"This has been the worst year we've seen so far. We really need to have a regional effort on this because this unsightly seaweed could end up affecting the image of the Caribbean," said Christopher James, chairman of the Tobago Hotel and Tourism Association.

There are various ideas about what is causing the seaweed boom that scientists say started in 2011, including warming ocean temperatures and changes in the ocean currents due to climate change. Some researchers believe it is primarily due to increased land-based nutrients and pollutants washing into the water, including nitrogen-heavy fertilizers and sewage waste that fuel the blooms.

Brian Lapointe, a sargassum expert at Florida Atlantic University, says that while the sargassum washing up in normal amounts has long been good for the Caribbean, severe influxes like those seen lately are "harmful algal blooms" because they can cause fish kills, beach fouling, tourism losses and even coastal dead zones.

"Considering that these events have been happening since 2011, this could be the 'new normal.' Time will tell," Lapointe said by email.

The mats of drifting sargassum covered with berry-like sacs have become so numerous in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean they are even drifting as far away as to West Africa, where they've been piling up fast in Sierra Leone and Ghana.

Sargassum, which gets its name from the Portuguese word for grape, is a floating brownish algae that generally blooms in the Sargasso Sea, a 2 million-square-mile (3 million-square-kilometer) body of warm water in the North Atlantic that is a major habitat and nursery for numerous marine species. Like coral reefs, the algae mats are critical habitats and mahi-mahi, tuna, billfish, eels, shrimp, crabs and sea turtles all use the algae to spawn, feed or hide from predators.

But some scientists believe the sargassum besieging a growing number of beaches may actually be due to blooms in the Atlantic's equatorial region, perhaps because of a high flow of nutrients from South America's Amazon and Orinoco Rivers mixing with warmer ocean temperatures.

"We think this is an ongoing equatorial regional event and our research has found no direct connection with the Sargasso Sea," said Jim Franks, senior research scientist at the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

Whatever the reason, the massive sargassum flow is becoming a major challenge for tourism-dependent countries. In large doses, the algae harms coastal environments, even causing the deaths of endangered sea turtle hatchlings after they wriggle out of the sand where their eggs were buried. Cleanup efforts by work crews may also worsen beach erosion.

"We have heard reports of recently hatched sea turtles getting caught in the seaweed. If removal of seaweed involves large machinery that will also obviously cause impacts to the beaches and the ecosystems there," said Faith Bulger, program officer at the Washington-based Sargasso Sea Commission.

Mexican authorities recently said they will spend about \$9.1 million and hire 4,600 temporary workers to clean up seaweed mounds accumulating along that country's Caribbean coast. Part of the money will be used to test whether the sargassum can be collected at sea before it reaches shore.

Some tourists in hard-hit areas are trying to prevent their summer vacations from being ruined by the stinking algae.

"The smell of seaweed is terrible, but I'm enjoying the sun," German tourist Oliver Pahlke said during a visit to Cancun, Mexico.

Sitting at a picnic table on the south coast of Barbados, Canadian vacationer Anne Alma said reports of the rotting seaweed mounds she'd heard from friends did not dissuade her from visiting the Eastern Caribbean island.

"I just wonder where the seaweed is going to go," the Toronto resident said one recent morning, watching more of mats drift to shore even after crews had already trucked away big piles to use as mulch and fertilizers.

The worst neighborhood in NYC for illegal trash dumping

By Rich Calder

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Hampered by barren, garbage-strewn lots near toxic Newtown Creek and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, Greenpoint is more down in the “dumps” than anywhere else in New York City.

Of the 224 cases of illegal trash dumping from 2013 through June, the Brooklyn neighborhood led all city neighborhoods with 15, a Post analysis of city databases found.

Other dumping “hot spots” include Canarsie (14) and East New York (10), also in Brooklyn; and Maspeth (12) and Ridgewood (12) in Queens.

“There’s not a lot of eyes on the streets in certain industrial areas of Greenpoint, and it’s a big problem,” said Councilman Steven Levin, who represents the area.

Levin said he plans to bring The Post’s findings to the attention of local cops.

But the numbers show a marked improvement from when The Post found 474 individuals or companies were fined citywide for illegal dumping in 2003 and 2004.

City officials attribute the decline in dumping cases to the city's massive building boom over the past decade, which rid neighborhoods of many abandoned buildings and vacant lots — prime targets for dumpers.

Bushwick, Brooklyn, led that list with a whopping 70 illegal dumping convictions from 2003 through 2004 — but only saw nine over the past 2 ½ years.

Greenpoint saw four convictions between 2003 and 2004. It replaced neighboring Bushwick as the top choice for dumpers, in part, because Bushwick has since become rapidly gentrified thanks to new development and a massive influx of artists who were priced out of Williamsburg by a Hipster invasion, officials and local activists say.

Today, the Greenpoint shoreline, like Masbeth on the Queens side of Newtown Creek, is filled with dead end streets where wood chips, tires, construction debris, and other waste are regularly dumped. The creek itself, a federal Superfund site, is filled with sewage, oil, dozens of stripped vehicles and other debris.

The favorite location for illegal dumpers is an isolated, industrial strip at the end Cherry Street in Greenpoint, which runs parallel to the BQE leading to creek's edge.

Eleven different parties were caught dumping debris there since 2013, eight who were eventually fined at least \$1,500 and another three who were able to get charges dismissed.

"If you are going to dump, Cherry Street is the place to do it," said North Brooklyn activist Phil DiPaolo. "It's no man's land — except for the homeless. It's pretty shady and a very creepy area at night."

Brooklyn led all boroughs with illegal dumping convictions from 2013 through June with 100 — or 44.6 percent — of the 224 citywide. Queens had 67, the Bronx 31, Staten Island 24 and Manhattan a mere two.

Sanitation Department spokesman Vito Turso attributes Manhattan's low number to the borough "having far fewer isolated areas where potential dumpers can unload the contents of their vehicles."

Violators found guilty of illegal dumping by city administrative law judges are usually socked with fines ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000 – on top of hundreds of dollars in additional costs for having their vehicles impounded by Sanitation Department cops or the NYPD.

The biggest violator since 2013 is a Ridgewood-based trash carting company called GW Metals Inc. The company, its workers and owner Jun Hui Guo were socked with \$22,500 in fines for eight separate violations since April 2013.

The illegal dumping, according to records, occurred at or near the site of the Cooper Avenue business, which is in an isolated manufacturing area a block from a cemetery.

Messages left with the company were not returned.